

Years ago, there lived an old miller and his wife and son. The miller worked in the flour mill and his son worked in the saw mill in the village while the wife worked in the home. Each member of the family worked hard to earn money to buy food, but the wages they earned were low and they usually ate cold beans and bread.

One dark evening, a soft knock was heard at the door and the miller looked at his wife to ask whether she were expecting company. When she replied no, the miller walked to the door. A man in a dark cloak came inside and the miller offered him hot coffee. As the man began to tell all about himself, the miller and his family realized he was a man with strange powers. The man said, "Thank you for your extreme kindness and I promise it will not go unrewarded. I have a magic monkey's paw that I will give to you, and it will grant you three wishes."

The mysterious man left their home and the wife told her husband to throw out the paw. She felt that it was evil and that something bad would happen; however, the miller ignored his wife and instead wished for a large sum of money. "We will see if the paw is magic," said the miller to his wife and son.

The next morning there was a knock on the door and the wife opened it. The man there said that her son had been killed in an accident at the saw mill, and he gave the woman a bag of coins that the owner of the mill had sent to them. The wife and husband wept and wept. The paw was magic indeed, and evil as well, and they decided to rid themselves of it.

That night they walked to the edge of the river and threw the paw in. It landed with a splash in the water, and the husband and wife prayed that it would sink to the bottom of the river. Then they went home to grieve for the death of their son.

Early the next morning a young man was walking by the river and noticed a strange monkey's paw. He stooped to pick it up and felt the magic feeling it gave off. Ah, he thought, this could be my lucky day, and he whistled as he walked down the river bank.

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